

Romance Reviews Today

The Best and The Brightest Reviews On the Web

By: Vi Janaway
October 2007

THE MASTER - Jean Johnson

Sons of Destiny - Book 3

Berkley Sensation

ISBN: 978-0-425-21706-1

September 2007

Fantasy Romance

At Sea; Port Blueford, Natalla; Nightfall Isle

Poor Dominor of Nightfall. Kidnapped from his home on Nightfall Isle, he is held captive on a ship bound for Mandare by certifiable male chauvinists who brag about how subjugated their females are and how much Dominor will love being a Mage in Mandare. If the metal collar, wrist and ankle manacles had not been rune-spelled, he would show them just how appreciative he is of their treatment and plans for him.

Then Fate steps in. The ship comes under fire from another ship, and everyone aboard the Mandarin vessel is taken to Port Blueford in Natalla to be sold as slaves. Despite his declarations of his identity and status, Dominor is still treated as a slave and put on the block to be sold.

But Fate once again intervenes in the form of lovely Lady Serina Avadan, whose lineage is even more impressive than Dominor's. She has powers of her own and is the Guardian of a Nunnery high in the mountains of Natalla and knows why there have been no male Mages born for many years. Fortunately, she has the means to outbid everyone else for Dominor because she needs a Mage of his power level to set things aright. In return for a year of his time, she will set him free and let Dominor return to Nightfall.

Both are used to being in control. Both are exceptionally strong-willed. Can Dominor and Serina find a common ground and put their differences aside to lend Fate a hand and fix something that was broken by two equally strong-willed Mages long ago? Getting to know each other and working through their differences is an adventure in itself. Serina is a master Arithmancer and Dominor is fascinated with her chalk slates that can change into the size of a blackboard as she works out problems requiring delicate precision planning.

THE MASTER is book three in the *Sons of Destiny* series. Jean Johnson is further revealed as an extraordinary new voice in fantasy. Her narrative is smooth, uncluttered, and the reader does not have to go back and re-read anything to keep up with the logic of the story. She has several characters, but each is an individual. Magic itself seems like a character at times, and the powers of Serina, Dominor, and his brother, Rydan, manifest themselves in delightful and innovative ways. And as always, love proves to be the deepest and sweetest emotion two people can experience. Dominor and Serina are winsome as a couple, and we get more glimpses into the personalities of the brothers. I don't know the release date, but the next book will be about Dominor's twin, Evanor, who has literally lost his voice, and maybe Serina's best friend, Mariel, an out of practice healer. Like the first two, THE SWORD and THE WOLF, THE MASTER is a keeper.